

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An animated gaming system comprising:
 - a. at least one housing;
 - b. at least one display area located on the housing;
 - c. a plurality of prize displays displaying game related indicia disposed on the display area;
 - d. at least one animated figure coupled to the housing, the animated figure comprising:
 - i. a first animated element, the first animated element being at least part of, or operatively coupled to, the animated figure, wherein the first animated element is moveable between at least two positions, wherein in at least one position, the first animated element indicates at least one of the plurality of prize displays;
 - ii. a second animated element, which is at least part of or operatively coupled to the animated figure, wherein the second animated element is movable between at least two positions.
2. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the animated figure comprises a representation of all or part of an animal, a bird, a human, a human-like figure, a boat, an automobile, or a train car.

3. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the game related indicia displayed by the prize display indicated by the first animated element comprises a monetary award.

- 5 4. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the second animated element indicates at least one of the plurality of prize displays and the game related indicia displayed by the prize display indicated by the second animated element comprises a multiplier.

- 10 5. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein in at least one position the second animated element indicates a prize display.

6. The animated game system of claim 5 wherein the prize display indicated by the second animated element comprises game related indicia.

- 15 7. The animated game system of claim 6 wherein the prize display indicated by the first animated element indicates different game related indicia than the prize display indicated by the second animated element.

- 20 8. The animated game system of claim 7 wherein the indicia on the prize display indicated by the first animated element comprises a monetary prize and the indicia on the prize display indicated by the second animated element comprises a multiplier.

9. The animated game system of claim 1 further comprising:

- a. a first actuator located in the housing and coupled to the first animated element;

and

- 5 b. a controller located in the housing determining a game outcome, and in communication with the first actuator, wherein the first actuator moves the first animated element in response to a signal sent by the controller.

10. The animated game system of claim 9 wherein the first actuator comprises a stepper

10 motor.

11. The animated game system of claim 9 wherein the first animated element is in

communication with the second animated element, whereby actuation of the first animated element by the first actuator may actuate the second animated element.

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12. The animated game system of claim 9 further comprising a second actuator located in the housing and in communication with the second animated element, the second actuator in communication with the controller, wherein the second actuator moves the second animated element in response to a signal sent by the controller.

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13. The animated game system of claim 12 wherein the first and second animated elements may be moved independently of each other by the first and second actuators in response to signals sent by the controller.

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14. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the animated figure represents a single object.

15. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the animated figure comprises a plurality of objects.

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16. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the second animated element comprises the animated figure.

- 15 17. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein at least one of the prize displays comprises a plurality of rotatable sections, each section comprising at least one indicia.

18. The animated game system of claim 17 wherein the first animated element indicates a

20 pay line comprising indicia on one or more rotatable sections.

19. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the first animated element may be moved at various movement rates, wherein at least a portion of the plurality of prize displays comprise game related indicia having a value, whereby the value of the game related indicia is correlated to the movement rate of the first animated element.
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20. The animated game system of claim 1 wherein the first animated element is animated for a time period having a duration, wherein at least a portion of the plurality of prize displays comprise game related indicia having a value, whereby the value of the game related indicia is correlated to the duration of the time period.
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21. The animated game system of claim 1 further comprising a player input device in communication with the controller, the player input device allowing a player to provide player input, the first animated element being moved proximate a prize display according to the player input.
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22. The animated game system of claim 21 wherein indicia is displayed on the prize display selected by the player after the player has entered the player input.

23. A gaming device comprising:

- a. at least one housing containing game components;
- b. a display area on the housing displaying a game to a player, the display area comprising:
 - i. a plurality of prize displays located on the display area and comprising game related indicia;
 - ii. an animated figure located on the display area and comprising at least one animated element, the animated element being moveable between at least two positions, wherein the animated element is proximate at least one prize display in at least one position; and
 - iii. a changeable display portion that displays changing images to a player

10 24. The gaming device of claim 23 wherein the game related indicia displayed on the

15 prize displays is correlated to the images displayed on the changeable display portion.

25. The gaming device of claim 23 wherein the changing images are correlated to the

15 animated figure.

20 26. The gaming device of claim 25 wherein at least a portion of the prize displays

comprise images related to the animated figure or images displayed on the changeable

display portion and the indicia appearing on those prize displays have a value, wherein the value of the game related indicia is correlated to the at least one prize display image.

5 27. The gaming device of claim 23 wherein the movement of the animated figure is correlated to the images displayed on the changeable display portion.

28. The gaming device of claim 23 wherein the prize displays appear on the changeable display portion.

10 29. The gaming device of claim 23 wherein the animated figure comprises a representation of all or part of an animal, a bird, a human, a human-like figure, a boat, an automobile, or a train car.

30. A gaming device comprising:

- a. a housing for holding game components;
- b. a game controller located in the housing, the game controller configured to present a game to a player and determine a game outcome;
- c. a display area located in the housing; and
- d. an animated figure disposed on the display area, the animated figure having a plurality of animated elements, the plurality of animated elements being moveable between at least a first and a second position, wherein the game outcome determines the position of at least a portion of the plurality of animated elements.

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31. The gaming device of claim 30 wherein the position of the animated elements represents the value of a bonus multiplier.

32. The gaming device of claim 30 wherein the animated figure is moveable between at least a first and a second position.

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33. The gaming device of claim 32 further comprising a display element located on the display area, wherein the animated figure can be moved behind the display element, thereby limiting the player's view of the animated figure.

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34. The gaming device of claim 30 wherein the animated figure comprises a representation of all or part of an animal, a bird, a human, a human-like figure, a boat, an automobile, or a train car.

35. A gaming device comprising:

- a. a housing for holding gaming components;
- b. a game controller disposed within the housing, presenting a game to a player, and controlling the operation of various game components;
- 5 c. a display area located in the housing and viewable by a game player;
- d. a display covering disposed over at least a portion of the display area, wherein the display area can be viewed from outside the housing through the display covering;
- e. an animated figure located on the display area, wherein the display covering defines an aperture, wherein a portion of the animated figure extends from an interior of the housing, through the aperture in the display covering, and outside the display covering;
- 10 f. an animated element associated with the animated figure, located behind the display covering, and moveable between at least a first and a second position, wherein in at least one position, the animated element is proximate a prize display, denoting that the prize display has been selected; and
- 15 g. a first actuator located within the housing and in communication with the animated element and the game controller, wherein the first actuator moves at least a portion of the animated element in response to a signal transmitted from the game controller.

36. The gaming device of claim 35 further comprising a second actuator located within the housing and in communication with the animated element, the second actuator in communication with the game controller, wherein the second actuator moves at least a portion of the animated element in response to a signal transmitted from the game controller.

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37. The gaming device of claim 35 wherein the animated figure comprises a representation of all or part of an animal, bird, human, human-like figure, boat, automobile, or train car.

38. An animated gaming system comprising:

- a. a housing, the housing being configured to hold gaming components;
- b. a game controller disposed in the housing, the game controller being configured to control game functions and components, present a game to a player, and randomly determine a game outcome;
- c. a display area located in the housing;
- d. a plurality of prize displays located on the display area displaying game related indicia; and
- e. an animated figure located on the display area and comprising:
 - i. at least one animated element, the animated element being moveable between at least a first and a second position, wherein in at least one position the animated element is proximate at least one prize display, denoting that the prize display has been selected by the animated element;
 - ii. an actuator located within the housing, coupled to the animated element, and in communication with the game controller, the actuator being configured to move the animated element in response to signals from the game controller, wherein the animated figure can be made to appear to indicate at least one prize display.

39. The animated gaming system of claim 38, wherein the animated figure can be made to appear to indicate at least two prize displays.

40. The animated gaming system of claim 39 wherein one prize display indicated by the
animated figure comprises a monetary prize amount and another prize display
indicated by the animated figure comprises a multiplier value.

5 41. The animated gaming system of claim 39 wherein the prize displays indicated by the
animated figure are indicated simultaneously.

42. The animated gaming system of claim 39 wherein the prize displays indicated by the
animated figure are indicated sequentially.

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43. The animated gaming system of claim 38 further comprising a motor controller
intermediate to and in communication with the game controller and the animated
element, the motor controller located within the housing, the motor controller
receiving signals from the game controller and moving the animated element
according to the signals received from the game controller.

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44. The animated gaming system of claim 38 further comprising a transducer in
communication with the game controller and generating sounds as directed by the
game controller.

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45. The animated gaming system of claim 38 wherein the animated figure comprises a representation of all or part of an animal, bird, human, human-like figure, boat, automobile, or train car.

46. A method for operating an animated gaming device comprising, but not necessarily in
the order shown:

- a. allowing a player to place a wager and play a game of chance having a random
game outcome;
- b. determining the random game outcome using a controller;
- c. moving at least a portion of a moveable animated figure on a display area of a
housing using an actuator in response to a signal received from the controller; and
- d. indicating, using the moveable animated figure, a prize display corresponding to
the random game outcome.

47. The method of claim 46 further comprising providing a primary game in association
with a bonus game, wherein at least steps c-d comprise the bonus game.

48. The method of claim 46 wherein the prize display comprises a monetary amount.

49. The method of claim 46 wherein the prize display comprises a multiplier.

50. The method of claim 46 wherein the display area comprises a changeable background
area, further comprising changing images displayed on the changeable background.

51. The method of claim 46 further comprising allowing the player to provide input via a player input device and moving the animated figure proximate a prize display according to the player input.

5 52. The method of claim 51 wherein the value of indicia appearing on the prize display selected by the player is displayed after the player enters the player input.

53. The method of claim 46 wherein the animated figure comprises a representation of all or part of an animal, bird, human, human-like figure, boat, automobile, or train car

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54. The method of claim 46 further comprising indicating at least a second prize display using the animated figure.